

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

24 August 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM No. 54-55 \*

SUBJECT: Presidential Elections in Brazil

DOCUMENT NO. 12  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒  
☐ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S (C)  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1979  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 11 MARCH 80 REVIEWER: 018557

1. The Brazilian presidential election picture has clarified considerably in recent weeks with the field now reduced to four presidential and two vice-presidential candidates. Attempts by Brazil's major parties to agree on a "national union" candidate have failed. Thus former President Getulio Vargas, who committed suicide in August 1954 in the face of armed forces pressure for his resignation, is still the chief issue in the current presidential campaign. Should the pro-Vargas forces appear certain of winning, a military coup is possible either before, during, or soon after the scheduled October 3 elections.

2. The candidates and their prospects. Two Vargas proteges now head the ticket which we believe would win if the elections were held today. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) has nominated for president Juscelino Kubitschek, former governor of the state of Minas Gerais. It also has formed a coalition with the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) by accepting Joao Goulart, Labor Minister under Vargas, as candidate for vice-president. The Kubitschek-Goulart ticket thus will be supported by Brazil's largest and strongest party (PSD) and by the parties which are likely to deliver the bulk of the labor-leftist vote. In addition, the Communist Party (PCB), which recently aligned itself with the PSD-PTB coalition, may be able to deliver to it as much as 5% of the total vote.

3. The National Democratic Union (UDN), founded primarily as an anti-Vargas movement, has nominated General Juarez Tavora for president and Milton Campos, former governor of Minas Gerais, for vice-president.

\* This memorandum has been coordinated with O/CI at the working level.

~~SECRET~~  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

The moderate-conservative UDN is Brazil's number two party, and its candidates are supported by the incumbent Cafe Filho administration and by the armed forces. Tavora has been gaining ground in recent weeks, but we do not believe that he can overcome the early Kubitschek lead.

4. Adhemar de Barros, former governor of Sao Paulo, is running for president as the candidate of the Social-Progressive Party, an organization whose strength is localized in the state of Sao Paulo. We feel that although de Barros has little chance of winning, he is in a position to influence the outcome of the elections. Since his candidacy's basic appeal is labor-leftist, it draws potential votes away from the Kubitschek-Goulart slate, though probably not enough to enable Tavora to win. If de Barros withdraws in favor of Kubitschek, the latter would be assured of victory. In the unlikely event that de Barros withdraws and throws his support to Tavora, the latter's chances of winning would be considerably enhanced. Neither de Barros nor a fourth presidential aspirant, Plinio Salgado, who cannot be regarded as a serious contender, have selected running mates for vice-president.

5. Prospects for a coup. Rumors of a military coup have been rife, reflecting the widespread belief that the Kubitschek-Goulart ticket would win in a free election and that the armed forces would not allow a return of the pro-Vargas influences they overthrew last year. Despite continuing pressures for a coup prior to the elections, we believe they will be held as scheduled. Most influential military leaders are reluctant to abandon their traditional role as "guardians of constitutional order", especially since they apparently feel that Tavora has a chance to succeed through normal electoral procedures. If the Kubitschek-Goulart forces win the election, we believe that there still would be less than an even chance of a coup, although the same military opposition that existed during the Vargas regime would continue under a Kubitschek-led government. Since the military primarily object to Goulart, the coup threat would be considerably lessened should moderate-conservative Campos win the vice-presidency, which might happen in a close election.

6. Recommendation. Regardless of who wins the election, the new administration taking office in January 1956 will have to cope with pressing balance of payments and inflationary problems. It will also be faced with demands for expansion of trade with the Soviet Bloc, continuation of the nationalistic petroleum policy, and revision of the 1946 Constitution. The government's approach to these problems could adversely

- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

affect US security interests. Therefore, while NIE 93-56 is not scheduled until the second quarter of 1956, we intend initiating terms of reference immediately consequent to the new government's formation, and recommend that the estimate be produced as early in the second quarter as possible. We do not believe, however, that an earlier production date would be either feasible or profitable.

25X1A9a



- 3 -

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~